

HALF-LIFE®



MATURE



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STUDIOS

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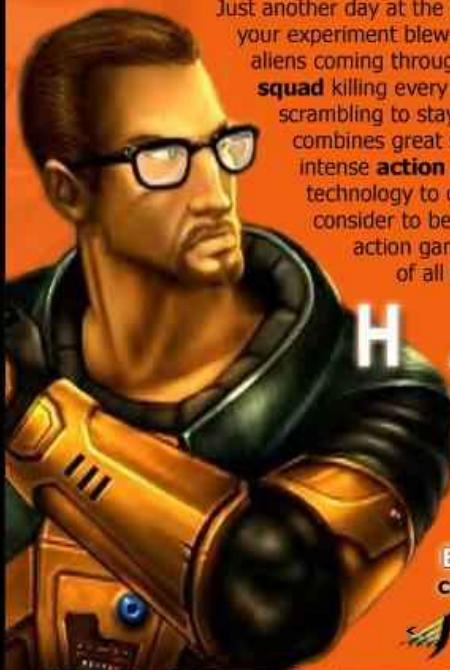
Dreamcast.

"The best first person shooter of all time..."

---Official Sega Dreamcast Magazine

Run. Think. Shoot. Live.

Just another day at the office. Or so you thought... until your experiment blew-up in your face. Now, with aliens coming through the walls, a military **death squad** killing every thing in sight, and you're scrambling to stay alive. **Half-Life** combines great storytelling with intense **action** and advanced technology to create what many consider to be the **greatest** action game experience of all time.



HALF-LIFE

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- ▲ Amazing amount of weapons
- ▲ Advanced AI

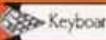
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ANIMATED VIOLENCE

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NTSC/U



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ISBN 1-58189-297-3

HALF-LIFE

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HALF-LIFE
Dreamcast.







HALF-LIFE
Dreamcast.



RP: That's not the definite title, but we felt that the story of Barney really needed to be told. After the original *Half-Life* came out, Barney was one of the most popular characters in the game and even though you keep seeing the same Barney over and over through the whole game, you really feel that this guy has a real story to him and we wanted to delve into that. In fact, *Half-Life* was actually written by a horror novelist named Marc Laidlaw and there's a really neat story to Barney. There's also a back-story to the *Half-Life* universe that we really needed to tell. For example, there's the part about the first team that brought back the crystals that Freeman is using to experiment on – we delve into that a little bit in the Barney story and uncover things about the *Half-Life* universe that were never revealed

RP: We didn't think of *Opposing Force* so much as new content although we may think about bringing it over, but there's only so much room on a Dreamcast disc and that's one of the main reasons why we didn't convert *Opposing Force* to the Dreamcast. We wanted to avoid things like disc swapping so we couldn't realistically fit it onto the disc as well as *Half-Life* and the Barney story - we haven't decided whether to port it over and include some other little things that we didn't include in the original *Half-Life*. We really wanted to do something that was custom designed for the Dreamcast, before. After Barney, there probably won't be any more additions to the original *Half-Life* so it was really important to take care of his story before we move onto something else.

Dreamcast

LE MAGAZINE OFFICIEL

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N°5

JUILLET/AOÛT 2000 • France métropolitaine: 49 F (7,47 €)

Zoom sur...

par Guillaume de Casabian



Stop exclu. Les images sur ces pages, vous ne les verrez nulle part ailleurs. Elles proviennent toutes de la version Dreamcast du jeu le plus attendu de la rentrée, annoncé avec une éventuelle option réseau (ce serait carrément chouette). Ze dream comes true ; le compte à rebours a commencé.

Je veux bien faire une petite pause pour vous causer de Half-Life, mais il va falloir m'aider. Commencez par prendre ce fusil à pompe et surveillez le couloir menant à la cafétéria; j'ai entendu des bruits bizarres en passant devant. Ce complexe de recherche a besoin d'un sérieux nettoyage... Ça tombe bien, vous êtes là pour ça!

À moins d'être totalement réfractaires au jeu sur PC, vous avez entendu parler de Half-Life au moins une fois dans votre vie, c'est obligé. Cette petite merveille du Shoot 3D a fait passer des heures difficiles à des centaines de milliers de joueurs. Il s'en est vendu plus de 1,5 million d'exemplaires dans le monde à ce jour, un record

pour un jeu micro. Préparez-vous psychologiquement, car le voici qui débarque sur Dreamcast, après un lifting du plus bel effet. En fait, vous pouvez carrément abandonner tout espoir de vie sociale pendant quelque temps. Bienvenue dans le monde des gens aux yeux rouges et aux cheveux blancs, proches de l'ulcère à cause du stress! Complètement exatique.

M'SIEUR, J'AI RATÉ LE DÉBUT DU FILM

Half-Life est LE Shoot 3D de la décennie, ni plus, ni moins. Sans déflorer un scénario blindé en rebondissements, sachez *grossost modo* que vous incarnez un mec qui s'attire des embrouilles. Gordon Freeman, de son petit nom, est un scienti-

fique de Black Mesa, un complexe de recherche ultra-secret. Problème numéro un, ce havre de paix pour la science a été soudainement envahi par des aliens belliqueux, à la suite d'une expérience foireuse. Problème numéro deux, l'armée a été envoyée pour éliminer tout ce qui y bouge encore, histoire d'éviter les débordements. Imaginez qu'on apprenne qu'un extra-terrestre a mis le zonzo dans la ville d'à côté, ou qu'un chimiste rescapé se rende dans les bureaux du *Time Magazine*! Im-pen-sa-ble. Quant à savoir si ce génocide programmé est la seule mission de l'armée, vous le saurez bien assez tôt... Seule certitude, vous, alias Gordon, êtes au cœur de la tourmente. Ça va chauffer pour vos fesses tout au long >

Genre
Shoot 3D

Éditeur
Havas Interactive

Disponibilité
Octobre 2000

Site Web [www.sierrastudios.com/
games/half-life-dreamcast/](http://www.sierrastudios.com/games/half-life-dreamcast/)

HL



Zoom sur...



RÉZO ET SUPPOSITIONS



On nous assure en coulisses que Half-Life DC supportera le jeu en réseau. Il faudra toutefois attendre le test définitif pour en avoir le cœur net (super, le jeu de mots, N.D.L.R.). Ça

ne nous interdit pas de jeter, en vrac, quelques réflexions sur le sujet.

1- Half-Life DC ne supportera pas les "mods" (déclinaisons du soft original sous forme d'add-on, c'est-à-dire des jeux à part entière avec une ambiance et des protagonistes inédits). Randy Pitchford, designer principal et chef de projet chez Gearbox Software, nous l'a assuré. Vous ne jouerez donc pas à Counterstrike, ni aux autres "douceurs" dérivées de Half-Life, auxquelles les possesseurs de PC ont droit.

2- Vous ne pourrez pas, non plus, télécharger de nouvelles maps pour jouer en réseau, ni de nouvelles "skins" (peaux ou textures, dans le jargon du Shooter 3D, N.D.L.R.) pour vos personnages. Il faudra se contenter des niveaux et des combattants proposés dans le jeu.

3- Les concepteurs n'excluent pas la possibilité que les joueurs sur DC affrontent des joueurs sur PC. L'info émane non seulement de Gearbox et de Havas, mais aussi de Raster Productions et Sega qui ont émis la même idée au sujet de Quake III Arena (lire la rubrique Internet p. 28-29).



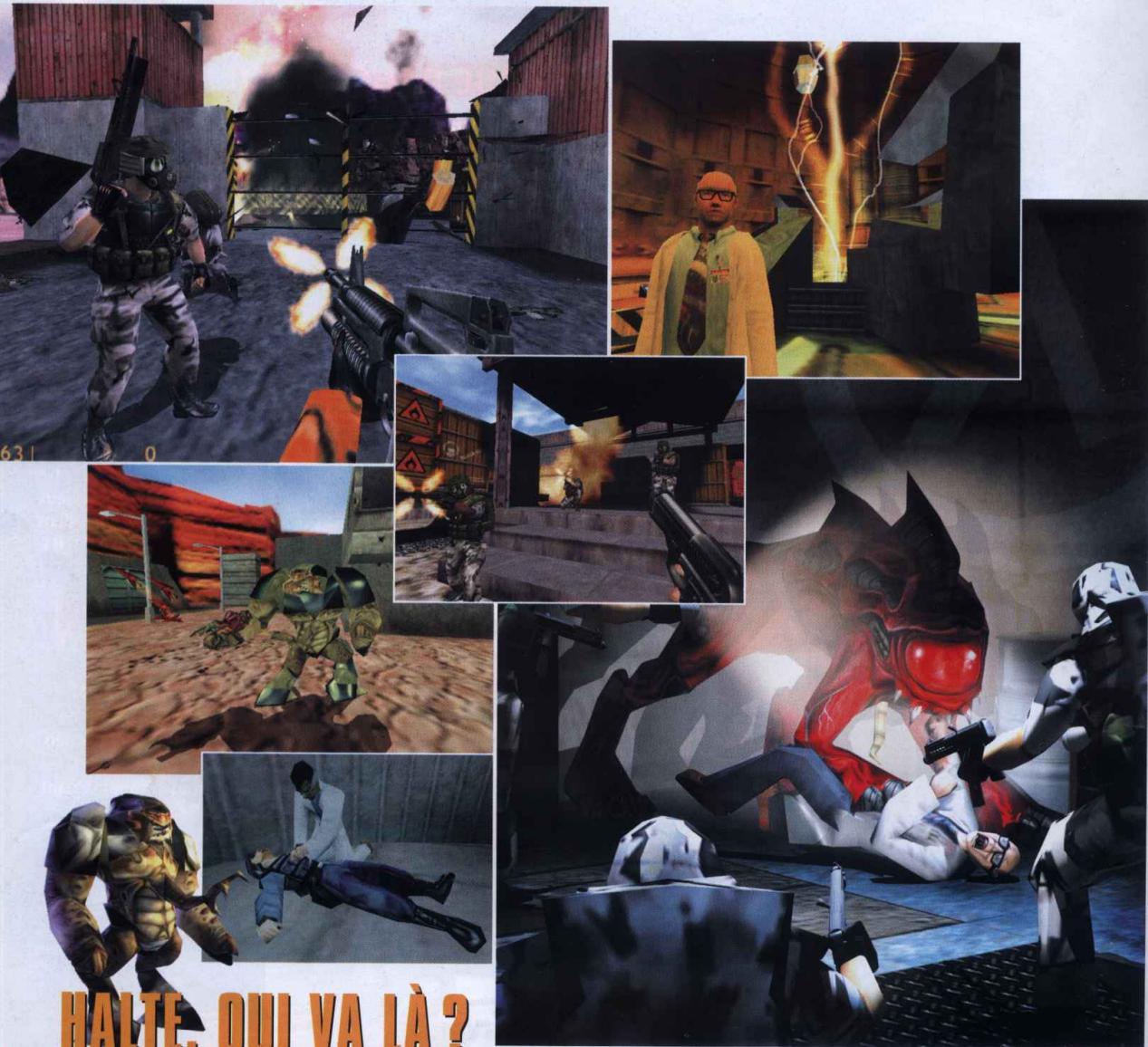
Sega Dreamcast.

de l'aventure. Une situation aussi tendue qu'un repas avec la belle-famille, après une mauvaise blague du gendre.

ÇA CANARDE EN FINESSE

En plus d'être particulièrement nombreux, vos adversaires font preuve d'une intelligence rare. Certains sont même plus rusés qu'une tribu de Sioux

toute entière. Si, armé d'un gun à plasma, vous foncez dans le tas (comme dans certains jeux concurrents, suivez mon regard), vous risquez de tomber sur un gros os à moelle. Dans Half-Life, les bestioles n'attendent pas patiemment que vous les abatiez une à une, dans un déluge de bastos. L'intelligence artificielle, qui gère leur comportement, est l'une des plus élaborées dans un jeu de ce type. Vos ennemis seront capables de vous localiser en fonction du bruit de vos pas et de mener des attaques combinées. Le challenge est double, >



HALTE, QUI VA LÀ ?

L'équipe qui a conçu Half-Life sur PC (Valve, pour ne pas citer son nom), a donné naissance à un bestiaire incroyable, ces clichés le prouvent. Certains aliens créés sont parmi les plus vicelards jamais vus dans un Shoot 3D. Ils se nomment Mawmen, Headcrab, Vortigaunts ou encore Barnacles. Leur taille diffère, leur façon d'attaquer aussi. Qu'ils soient seuls ou en nombre, ils vous en feront voir de toutes les couleurs. Malades du cœur, absténir.



par conséquent. Mettre en avant vos réflexes de killer sera aussi capital qu'utiliser le résidu de matière grise de votre cervelle — si vous en possédez, bien sûr.

UNE ÉCONOMIE DE 10 000 BALLES ?

Un des softs les plus populaires du monde micro sur console... L'exploit mérite qu'on le souligne. Seule la Dreamcast pouvait le réaliser. Ce n'est pas tout. Le développeur Gearbox Software, qui a adapté Half-Life sur Dreamcast sous l'égide de Valve (le studio de développement à l'origine du jeu micro), promet une version améliorée : le graphisme sera affiné (davantage de polygones) ; l'animation deviendra plus fluide, et l'intrigue comportera des niveaux inédits. Ça force le

respect. D'où une économie substantielle de 10 000 brouzoufs ! Rangez votre chéquier, un jeu de cette qualité ne nécessite pas un PC à une brique, équipé d'une carte accélératrice 3D et d'une carte-son surround de la morte. Half-Life sort ici sur Dreamcast, console dont le prix laisse rêveur au regard de ses capacités techniques. J'en connais qui vont être jaloux... D'autant que le jeu admettrait une option réseau (lire l'encadré p. 14), comme nous l'a personnellement affirmé le grand patron de Havas Interactive aux États-Unis, sur le salon de l'E3, en mai dernier. Encore un peu de patience, la sortie est prévue cet automne. Après ça, nous ne pourrons plus rien pour vous, mais vous aurez été prévenus. ■

Zoom sur...

ENTRETIEN

RANDY PITCHFORD, DESIGNER PRINCIPAL ET CHEF DE PROJET SUR HALF-LIFE DC

Gearbox Software, studio basé au Texas, État où se forment de monstrueuses tornades, bosse depuis plusieurs mois sur l'adaptation. Sous l'égide de Valve, l'équipe à l'origine de Half-Life, et associé à un autre studio dénommé Captivation Digital Laboratories, Gearbox a réalisé l'exploit de conserver TOUS les éléments ayant fait le succès du jeu culte, mais en plus, il y a apporté des améliorations. Tenaces, nous avons percé l'œil du cyclone pour en savoir plus. Rencontre avec le maître à penser d'un futur chef-d'œuvre.

"Nous l'appelons LE JEU Dreamcast."

Dreamcast Magazine : Commençons par le commencement. Le portage sur Dreamcast a-t-il été une galère ?

Randy Pitchford : Ça s'est plutôt bien passé. Captivation Digital Laboratories a pris en charge tout l'aspect technique de l'adaptation, et une équipe de graphistes de Gearbox – et de Captivation – s'est chargée de l'amélioration des modèles 3D. Captivation connaît bien la console ; Gearbox avait une solide expérience dans la création de contenu pour Half-Life (le studio est à l'origine d'un add-on de Half-Life sur PC, intitulé *Opposing Force*, élu meilleur jeu de l'année 1999 par plusieurs magazines de jeux, N.D.L.R.) ; ce projet a donc été mené avec brio. Nous avons vraiment optimisé les talents réunis pour l'occasion. Ce fut un réel plaisir de participer à cette aventure.

DM : Comment, vous-même, définiriez-vous Half-Life ?

R.P. : Half-Life est le Shoot 3D le plus important jamais réalisé, depuis les premiers jeux de Id Software, comme Doom. En dévoiler l'action et la trame ne lui rendrait pas justice. Tous ceux qui y ont joué, savent pourquoi Half-Life a été élu plus de 50 fois "meilleur jeu de l'année" par la presse du monde entier. Et ceux qui n'ont pas encore essayé, seraient bien avisés d'y jeter un coup d'œil.

"Il faut voir Half-Life DC comme une nouvelle référence."

DM : Avez-vous donné au projet un sympathique nom de guerre, dans le genre "projet machinchose" ?

R.P. : Nous l'appelons "LE JEU Dreamcast". Nous n'avons jamais dévié de cet objectif : imposer Half-Life comme le meilleur jeu d'action 3D sur cette console. Cette adaptation devrait remettre les pendules à zéro concernant le portage de softs PC sur DC. Il faut le voir comme une nouvelle référence.

DM : Quels changements majeurs avez-vous apportés ? Parlez-nous des modèles 3D, par exemple. Ils semblent avoir plus la patate que sur PC...

R.P. : La plupart des modèles 3D ont été revus à la hausse de façon significative. Nous avons pleinement utilisé les capacités de la Dreamcast.

Cette version de Half-Life ne sera pas "simplement" plus jolie, elle comprendra aussi des améliorations stylistiques importantes, avec des modèles mieux animés. Comparez des images DC et PC, vous verrez : la différence est flagrante.

DM : Avez-vous modifié le scénario ?

R.P. : Nous avons inclus un épisode supplémentaire, exclusif à la version Dreamcast, en plus d'avoir enrichi le contenu de l'aventure dans son ensemble. L'épisode inédit s'intitule Half-Life : Guard Duty. Vous y interprétez Barney, un des gardes dans le jeu original, devenu célèbre depuis. Barney est confronté à ses propres problèmes, en parallèle de ceux de Gordon, quand commencent les emmerdes dans le centre de Black Mesa. Par moment, d'ailleurs, les deux scénarios se recoupent. Si vous êtes attentifs, vous apercevez Gordon en blouse blanche. L'objectif de la mission consiste à garder Barney en vie. Je n'en dirai pas plus. Suspense !

"Nous avons enrichi l'aventure d'un épisode inédit."

DM : Question jouabilité, comment avez-vous effectué la transition sur un paddle DC ?

R.P. : Pour les habitués au clavier/souris, ce sera un peu bizarre. Mais si nous autres joueurs, acharnés du clavier/souris, prenons notre pied avec une manette, il n'y a alors aucune raison pour que les possesseurs de la console ne s'éclatent pas. Il est toutefois essentiel de proposer une alternative, à savoir la possibilité de jouer avec un clavier Dreamcast relié à une souris, dès que celle-ci sera commercialisée (Sega France n'a rien confirmé à ce sujet, N.D.L.R.). Finalement, les plus chanceux seront les joueurs sur DC : ils auront le choix des armes.

DM : Avez-vous sacrifié des éléments graphiques du jeu pour en conserver la fluidité (dans l'animation) ?

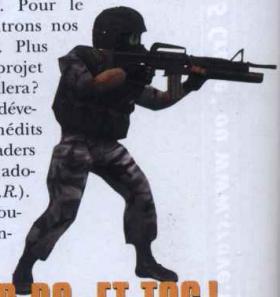
R.P. : La version bêta actuelle tourne plutôt bien. Le résultat est même meilleur que la version PC sur ma bécane. Reste à optimiser quelques détails. La Dreamcast a

été conçue pour afficher une 3D de qualité, avec un défilement rapide. Nous avons exploité ses fonctionnalités à 100 %. Il en découle un jeu DC plus détaillé et plus fin que son homologue PC.

"Le résultat est meilleur que la version PC sur ma bécane."

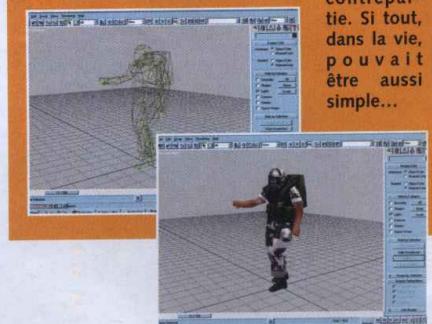
DM : Quel sera votre prochain projet sur Dreamcast ? Une version de Opposing Force ?

R.P. : J'aimerais beaucoup voir Opposing Force et les derniers add-on multi-joueurs (comme Team Fortress Classic et OpFor CTF, N.D.L.R.) portés sur Dreamcast. Pour le moment, nous concentrerons nos efforts sur Half-Life... Plus tard, qui sait à quel projet Gearbox Software s'attellera ? Nous souhaitons autant développer des concepts inédits que travailler avec les leaders d'un genre que nous adorons (le Shoot 3D, N.D.L.R.). Alors, qui sait ? Vous pouvez vraiment vous attendre à tout.



MIEUX QUE SUR PC, ET TOC !

La totalité des modèles 3D de Half-Life DC ont été revus par Gearbox Software. Les capacités techniques de la console ont permis d'accroître le nombre de polygones sans pour autant ralentir l'action. En clair, les protagonistes paraissent plus vrais que sur PC, et le jeu ne souffre pas d'un nombre d'images par seconde diminué en contrepartie. Si tout, dans la vie, pouvait être aussi simple...



RP: That's the kind of thing that happens during marketing meetings which is what I try to stay out of, but there are a few possibilities – I think we were thinking about stuff like *Code: Blue* because Barney's a cop and wears blue... you know, things like that. *Guard Duty* seems to be the most accepted one that we've played with, so that's what we've been using as the development title. To be honest, it's probably going to end up as *Guard Duty* but it just hasn't been set in stone yet – I think it has to go through a couple of things in the legal department before it's all signed and sealed. *Guard Duty* just seems like the right name because it fits in nicely with the *Half-Life* games... In *Opposing Force*, you were a soldier on the opposite side but in *Guard Duty* you're a guard and you're on duty, so it's a really good title for it and I think it's probably going to stay.

[Editor's Note: Of course, it didn't stay and the game is now called *Blue Shift*... just in case you missed the boxout.]



www.dreamcast.net

Half-Life



Publisher Havas Interactive
Developer Gearbox Software
Origin USA
Price £39.99
Genre Shoot-'em-up
Release November 22



Half-Life

One of the most anticipated games in the Dreamcast's line-up finally hits the shelves. It's got to be good... hasn't it?

Several years back, Valve Software brought a game to the PC that merged what was then an unbelievably high level of artificial intelligence with an engrossing story line, and slipped it all effortlessly into a first person shoot-'em-up skin. The game was touted as being 'better than GoldenEye' and 'the new benchmark in enemy AI'. To this day it remains one of the most played online games – new patches are still being churned out at an alarming rate, for goodness sake.

This game was GOOD. This game was *Half-Life*, and PC loyalists everywhere used it as their secret weapon in the then-fashionable PC Vs console wars. Ever since the Dreamcast was launched, there were rumours flying around of a

Half-Life conversion. Sega fans around the world couldn't believe their ears when Valve announced that it would be making it even better for Dreamcast! Quite a highly-anticipated game, wouldn't you say? Well, it's finally here – and do we really need to even review it? After all, it's got to be a sure-fire hit, right?

Halfway There

Half-Life finds you playing the part of Gordon Freeman, a research scientist in a top-secret military research facility. Things go a bit wrong when one of the experiments creates an inter-dimensional rip, letting in all sorts of nasty creatures. As one of the few survivors, it's your job to sort it all out. You'll come across a variety of enemies, all superbly detailed



awesome moment

You'll need to lure this beast into the generators in order to take him down!



and beautifully modelled – the marines, for example, come to mind straight away, with their facemasks and attachments all present and correct.

Despite the memory differences between a PC and a Dreamcast, the enemy AI has been ported over perfectly. The marines work in close-knit groups, advancing and retreating as you would expect them to, whereas the aliens simply lunge at you until they've been taken out. Admittedly there are occasions when you can walk up to a marine, wave at him and call his mum an old cow without him even blinking, but it becomes something to look forward to rather than something that detracts from the game.

The sound effects in the original were one of the aspects that made the PC version so cool. The same can be said for this version – the sound effects are crisp and the screams will send a shiver down your spine.

Half-Eaten

Let's face it – a fair number of us love a bit of gore in our games and *Half-Life*, being a game with a nice little arsenal of weapons, doesn't disappoint. Everybody in the game, be they human, alien, alive or dead, can be blown to pieces. For



infoburst

Extra information

- > The Dreamcast version of *Half-Life* has been programmed by the team that wrote the add-on version for the PC.
- > The PC version of *Half-Life* won over 50 (!) awards for its loveliness.
- > The average half-life of Alex's kisses is approximately nine seconds.
- > The average half-life of Alex's relationships is approximately ten seconds.

2



"Chucking a grenade at a dead body will result in chunks of flesh and bone ricocheting off the walls"



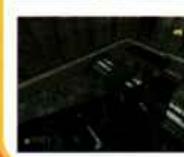
Electric bolts against a crowbar... somehow, we don't think you'll stand much of a chance here! Ah, the hand grenade – just lob it and cover your ears quick. How do you like your eggs? Sunny side up or full of alien bugs?

Total Massacre

> The aliens tend to turn us humans into pre-packaged mincemeat. The aliens that hang from the ceiling send out long tendrils that grab you and winch you up into their jaws. If you kill one of them, they'll throw up everything that they have eaten, which normally includes vital organs and half-digested limbs! Failing that, you can always do it yourself... try chucking a grenade at someone and you'll see!



[4] Doh, a tank. In theory, you'd be able to bust out quite easily in that... if only you could drive it. D'oh! [5] These zombies are a real pain in the arse – just smack them about a bit before moving on. [6] Things don't get any easier outside the base...



CONTINUE



[1] Mmm, acid. You don't want to be falling into that... unless you fancy some major plastic surgery later on.
 [2] Guns, guns, guns! There are loads of weapons on offer here. [3] Getting up close and personal with the army ain't exactly easy... [4] These things are just plain annoying — blast them in the face, matey!



The Man In The Pub

> This month, we had a chat with our friend The Man about *Half-Life* over a swift half of bitter. Being an expert on the subject, he was a bit peevish when we mentioned that the Dreamcast version wasn't totally amazing...



Dodgy Frame Rate

Bloody hell — *Arf-Life* on the Dreamcast jerks aboot more than me sister Beryl and she's got a medical condition. Dahnt they know wot optim-i-sation is? Even I've 'erd of that and I'm from the East End, like!

Loading Times

I dahn't care if the loadin' times are in exactly the same place as the bloomin' PC version — I dahn't wanna 'ave to wait five minutes when I walks into a new corridor. It's a flippin' disgrace, I tells ya!

Online Play

Wot? No online play? Wot's all that abhat then, eh? The 'ole point ov playin' *Half-Life* was that you cood blow ya mates into little bits wiv them big guns — now you've only got yourself ta play wiv! And naahah they fink they can just bring aht anovver one next year, costin' us anovver £40! Oll! Havas! NOOOOOO!

Please note: For once in his life, The Man In The Pub knows exactly what he's talking about. A rare occurrence if ever there was one.

"Sadly, the frame rate is amongst the worst that we've ever seen. *Half-Life*? Half-finished, more like"

example, chucking a grenade at a dead body will result in chunks of flesh and bone ricocheting off the walls... mmm, lovely. The seemingly innocent scientists can die in a variety of ways, ranging from being ripped apart by aliens to being burned alive by massive jet engines or tossed in the air and swallowed hole by giant fish. A gunfight in an enclosed room will almost certainly result in the walls being sprayed with blood, which will stay there throughout the level. It's all extremely satisfying to say the least.

Half-Done

So, what could possibly be wrong with this game? The graphics and sound are spot on — the Dreamcast could handle any other technicalities with its eyes closed, right? Sadly, one of the most important aspects of the game (namely the frame rate) is amongst the worst that we've ever seen. This isn't a case of the hardware limitations, as the problem is so varied that it can only be a case of bad programming. You can walk down a corridor with no enemies in it and have the screen updating at 60fps, only to

walk down the next corridor (still with no enemies) and have the frame rate drop to around 20fps... aargh! With a game such as this, where you have to be able to aim accurately, a constant frame rate is a must. If the game ran at a constant 30fps it would be fine, but dropping from 60 to below 30 and sometimes as low as 3fps (what?) makes it near unplayable in some areas. Most of the time the game runs smoothly, but the occasions where it doesn't really ruin things. And we won't even start on the fact that every couple of rooms you'll have to face a tediously-long loading screen!

If this game had an acceptable constant frame rate, it would have scored into the nineties but in its current state, it's just not good enough to be up there with the best. *Half-Life*? Half-finished, more like!

Chandra Nair

If we were pushed for an immediate response, we might find it tough to come up with words to describe *Half-Life* on the Dreamcast. It's a great game in regards to the story and gameplay — true. Graphically, it's a major improvement over the PC version — true again. The addition of *Blue Shift* only goes to add to an already ace game — true, true. However (well, you knew it was coming), the word 'disappointment' springs to mind... no online mode, ridiculous loading times and a frame rate choppier than a woodcutter's axe. We have to say it — it IS a good game but it's the little things that prevent it being an amazing one. Sorry.

Alex Warren



Dreamcast Magazine

Opinion

HALF

- Highly-detailed character models
- Engaging story line that'll keep you interested
- Loads of cool weapons to play with

VISUALS

92%

SOUNDS

89%

GAMEPLAY

72%

VALUE

84%

DM Rating 81%

Summing up
Half-Life on the Dreamcast fails to deliver on most of the promises it made all those months ago. What a shame.

Alternatively

- > Quake III Arena
- > Shadow Man

Dreamcast
EXCLUSIVE!

HALF-LIFE ON THE E



It's nearly here – the title that PC players voted 'Best Game Ever' has almost finished its journey to the Dreamcast. Martin Mathers trekked out to Texas to see what all the fuss was about...

Imagine the scene – a collection of eleven grown English, French and German journalists, having flown halfway around the world to an American state where going outside for more than an hour could give you heat exhaustion, now sit in a small room high up inside an office block. Yes, it was crowded and unnatural for that many blokes to be so close together but no-one really cared; not because we liked it, but because we were all there for a very special reason. After all, it's not every day you get to be one of the first people in the world (excluding the developers, of course) to play the Dreamcast version of one of the greatest games in history...

Over dramatic? Perhaps. Still, being among the first to play the world-renowned *Half-Life* on the Dreamcast is one of those experiences that you tend to get rather excited about. Okay, so maybe visiting Texas and getting to do something other than wander around Bournemouth for a few days was a factor as well but for the most part, it was all because of *Half-Life*. Really. That and the chicken-fried steak that they served at the Wizard's Sports Bar in downtown Plano, anyway.

Having The Time Of Your Half-Life

After playing the game for the whole of a scorching hot Monday afternoon, it's easy to talk about the improvements to the game. To say that *Half-Life* on the Dreamcast is an improvement over the PC version would be a hideous understatement. You might have thought that simply bringing over a game of such magnitude like *Half-Life* would have sufficed – for the people at Gearbox though, that just wasn't enough. Where the PC version had to cater for such a wide band of users (don't forget, PCs have so many different standards that we could quite easily lose count) everyone who owns a Dreamcast has the same standard. Rather than having to



DGE



"It's not every day you're the first to play a new version of one of the greatest games ever"



Electric Blue Shift

> We know what you're thinking: you've played *Half-Life* on the PC before so now that it's coming to the Dreamcast, you want more than just the same old game. Well, never fear - Gearbox (the team behind the original *Half-Life* add-on, *Opposing Force*) has felt your pain and decided to take action. Aside from cranking up the Freeman adventure of *Half-Life* a notch or two, it has gone and created an entirely new side of the story to make the Dreamcast release extra special. That game - following various last minute changes - is called *Blue Shift*...

The story pretty much mirrors the tale of Gordon Freeman's exploits as he tries to escape the Black Mesa Facility... only this time through the eyes of Barney Calhoun, the ever-faithful security guard. If you've played through the original *Half-Life*, you'll know that Barney pops up in various locations throughout the game (during the tram ride at the start, the reception hall, the accident and so on) - these events are replicated during *Blue Shift*, only in reverse so that you'll encounter Freeman on your travels. Smart.

Being the duty-bound security guard that he is, Barney starts the adventure as he clocks on for another day at the office/secret underground lab - of course, we all know what happens when Gordon makes a bodge of the experiment and things go a bit pear-shaped. Cue lots of teleporting aliens, new weapons for Barney to blow the hell out of stuff and plenty of brain-taxing puzzles to solve as he tries to get his arse out of Black Mesa in one piece. Gearbox is keeping tight-lipped about much of the Barney story at the moment, so it looks like what lies ahead is going to be a big surprise. Suffice to say, if it's anything like *Half-Life* then you know you're going to be in for one hell of a ride...



continued

HALF-LIFE ON THE EDGE



"Half-Life looks exactly like the older PC version, only better. Much better"

compromise visual quality for the sake of those who can't be bothered/afford to upgrade their machines, this meant that the teams behind the Dreamcast conversion could really go to town with what the machine could do.

Examples? Well, how about the characters that fill the Black Mesa facility – both the good and the decidedly evil kind. Rather than having their clothes surgically attached to them, the doctors now wear free-flowing lab coats and ties that flap gently in the breeze of the air conditioning. Security guards now have actual fingers with which to push keypads and buttons rather than just unanimated block fists. It might not sound like much, but it's the little details that tend to stand out in a game like this... and all through your bog-standard TV too. Through a VGA box (something that hopefully, a few of you out there will have... it's becoming a bit of a

necessity these days) the game looks even closer to its older PC brother, only better. Much better.

Half-Life As We Know It

As for the game conversion itself, it goes without saying that Freeman's adventure is fully intact. Everything you'd expect from a game that won more than 50 'Game Of The Year' awards has made it across to the Dreamcast without compromise. You want an engrossing single-player story line that'll keep you balanced on the edge of your seat, combined with plenty of action and explosive weaponry, more aliens than the set of an *X-Files* episode and some of the best level design we've ever seen? As they say down at the local *What-A-Burger*, "You've got it." It's not all just running around, blowing away anything that moves, you know – no siree. What you've got here is a game that mixes the

Spill The Beans

During our little jaunt out to the US of A, we managed to block Randy Pitchford (President of Gearbox Software) in a darkened corner and forced him to answer our questions about one of the hottest FPS games for the Dreamcast yet... that's *Half-Life*, in case you weren't paying attention earlier. We have ways of making them talk...

Dreamcast Mag: Okay, an easy one to start with... with *Half-Life* already appearing on the PC, was it necessary to devote many resources and people to bringing it to the Dreamcast, or was it just a straight PC-to-DC port?

Randy Pitchford: There are a lot of people involved in this project, simply because it's a very important title for Sierra and for Valve Software. It's a very

special product with a special set of teams devoted to it – we've got Valve, the developers of the original game, taking a keen interest and spending a lot of time directing the development of the whole process. We've got a team like Gearbox, who is intimately related to the *Half-Life* franchise by creating an award-winning add-on for it; we've got Captivation Digital Laboratories who know the Dreamcast better than anyone else and, of course, there's Sierra Studios who is the publisher of the product. And all of us together are working with Sega, so there's a pretty big team behind the whole thing.

DM: How much did you feel was necessary to change within the game in order to make it different enough for Dreamcast owners and yet still manage to attract people who have already played it?

RP: To be honest we knew that if we didn't preserve the original *Half-Life*, the one that all these console players that don't have PCs have heard about as being the best game ever made... if we didn't preserve it enough then we'd be in some serious trouble with the Dreamcast owners so we wanted to preserve the original game as much as

possible. On the other hand, we wanted to take the opportunity to deliver new content for the Dreamcast version and that's why we created the Barney story and that's what we're doing.

Barney's story is one of the things that really makes the Dreamcast version of *Half-Life* stand out from the PC version and makes it really much more than just a cheap PC-to-DC port. There have been a lot of stories on the Dreamcast that used to be PC titles and a lot of these teams don't do a very good job of it – they just get a third-party developer to port the code over, put it in a box and send it out. We took a lot more time than that, though, because we enhanced the original game and put in brand new content for the Dreamcast, so that's significant.

DM: But as well as putting together an entirely new game, why didn't you think about bringing a proven success such as *Opposing Force* to the Dreamcast?

RP: We didn't think of *Opposing Force* so much as new content although we may think about bringing it over, but there's only so much room on a Dreamcast disc and that's one of the main reasons why we didn't convert *Opposing Force* to the Dreamcast. We wanted to avoid things like disc swapping so we couldn't realistically fit it onto the disc, as well as *Half-Life* and the Barney story – we haven't decided whether to port it over and include some other little things that we didn't include in the original *Half-Life*. We really wanted to do something that was custom designed for the Dreamcast,

that took advantage of the space we had left and was a totally new project that no-one has ever seen before. If we had included *Opposing Force*, we wouldn't have been able to put in something new and what's more, we would have had to trim down *Opposing Force* so that it wasn't a full version of the game in order to fit it on the disc. It would have meant that Dreamcast owners wouldn't get anything that PC gamers didn't already have and there wouldn't have been anything special about this version of the game, so we really want to make it special and that's why we didn't include *Opposing Force*.

DM: Okay, so why concentrate on a story such as *Guard Duty*?

RP: That's not the definite title, but we felt that the story of Barney really needed to be told. After the original *Half-Life* came out, Barney was one of the most popular characters in the game and even though you kept seeing the same Barney over and over throughout the whole game, you really feel that this guy has a real story to tell and we wanted to deliver into that. In fact, *Half-Life* was actually written by a horror novelist named Marc Laidlaw and there's a really neat story to Barney. There's also a back-story to the *Half-Life* universe that we really needed to tell. For example, there's the part about the first team that brought back the crystals that Freeman is using to experiment on – we delve into that a little bit in the Barney story and uncover things about the *Half-Life* universe that were never revealed.





A-Shooting We Will Go

> Ahhh, America. Land of the free, home of the brave... and the place to be if you want do a spot of shooting in your spare time. Down in the Lone Star state (that's Texas to you and me) there's nothing they like better than going down to the local gun club and picking off a few unarmed targets. It was only natural then that we wanted to have a go - as the saying goes, 'When in Rome... go fire some big guns'.

Not surprisingly, we decided to stick to something a bit lower on the firing scale rather than plumping for a full-on assault rifle. Guns on display - a Colt .45 with laser sight (oooh), a .22 rifle and the good ol' Revolver that nearly sent us flying with the recoil. Still, the man Mathers did rather well considering the odds... oh, and the fact that he nearly shot himself in the process. No, don't ask - it's a long story...

Thanks to the guys at The Bullet Trap in Plano, Texas for help with our little visit!



before. After Barney, there probably won't be any more additions to the original *Half-Life* so it was really important to take care of his story before we move onto something else.

RP: You mentioned that it might not be called *Guard Duty* when the game finally ships...

DM: That's the kind of thing that happens during marketing meetings which is what I try to stay out of, but there are a few possibilities - I think we were thinking about stuff like *Code: Blue* because Barney's a cop and wears blue... you know, things like that. *Guard Duty* seems to be the most accepted one that we've played with, so that's what we've been using as the development title. To be honest, it's probably going to end up as *Guard Duty* but it just hasn't been set in stone yet - I think it has to go through a couple of things in the legal department before it's all signed and sealed. *Guard Duty* just seems like the right name because it fits in nicely with the *Half-Life* games... in *Opposing Force*, you were a soldier on the opposite side but in *Guard Duty* you're a guard and you're on duty, so it's a really good title for it and I think it's probably going to stay.



DM: Did you have much trouble converting the controls over from the PC to the Dreamcast? There were an awfully large amount of keys used on the keyboard when the PC version came out...

RP: We've spent a lot of time making the game run well on the Dreamcast pad - we're assuming that everyone's going to have one rather than a keyboard. The default configuration is the one that we like but we've also created a couple of other configurations that people can choose from, as well as a custom one so that you can take the controls and set them up however you want to play the game to the best of your liking.

It is possible to use every single command on the Dreamcast pad, because there are a lot of complicated actions that you can do in Half-

Life but not so many that it makes it impossible. The default configuration handles everything apart from reloading your gun and weapons cycling - the way we handle that is if your gun is empty, then the trigger becomes Reload because you can't fire your gun any more. Changing weapons is also done by holding down the fire button and moving the Directional key left or right, so we didn't really have to make any compromises there.

[Editor's Note: Of course, it didn't stay and the game is now called *Blue Shift* just in case you missed the boxout.]

However, you'll notice that our Dreamcasts have got keyboards plugged into them and the game is going to support the mouse peripheral as well, so if you're a PC player who would like to take advantage of the upgraded version of *Half-Life*, you can go ahead and plug in a keyboard and a mouse [once it comes out] so that you can play it just like you did on the PC. Personally, I'm a PC player so I prefer the keyboard and mouse setup but I don't do too badly with the pad. In fact, we forced ourselves to use the Dreamcast controller as much as possible when testing the game so that we can be sure that game is actually fun to use with it.

DM: Is bringing *Half-Life* to a home console, did you find the Dreamcast an easy machine to work with or was it a total pain in the arse?

RP: Compared to Sega's last system, it's infinitely easier to use. It all depends on what your background is - our background is in PC development and we use the tools that we're familiar with, like 3D chips and Power VR and those things are replicated to an extent inside the Dreamcast, so it's not like it's a totally foreign thing compared to other consoles. Luckily, here at Gearbox we haven't really had to worry about a lot of that process because that's what Captivation are doing. They're the guys that are having to sort out the porting of the code - we've been mostly involved in the upgrading process and developing the new Barney project. In general though, the Dreamcast is a very nice system to work with; it's got the

advantages of a console in that you know what the platform is because it's always the same for everybody, but it also has the advantage of having PC architecture so it's kind of neat.

DM: There seem to be a lot of first-person shoot-'em-up games on the horizon for the Dreamcast - in particular, *Quake III Arena* is due to arrive just after the planned date for *Half-Life*. Do you see any competition from a game like *Quake III*?

RP: I don't know... they are both first-person games, but they're totally different. *Quake III* is more about the multiplayer experience and *Half-Life* is the most tremendous single-player game to appear. *Quake III* seems to be more like a sport - it's competition, one-on-one and you get in, play your match and then it's over which is fun, but it's totally different. *Half-Life* is about narrative, depth and story line, but it's also about challenge and action adventure. Although they're both first-person games and people compare them when they look at the screenshots, they're actually totally different games.

I think there's plenty of room for both in the end - we're kind of high on *Half-Life* at the moment because it's done so well in the past and more recently, *Opposing Force* which we wrote beat *Quake III* for 'PC Action Game Of The Year' and that was just an add-on! Next to each other, if people want a single-player first-person game (which most console gamers will) then I think that a lot of people will choose *Half-Life*.

"If people want a single-player first-person game, I think that a lot of them will pick Half-Life"



continued

HALF-LIFE ON THE EDGE



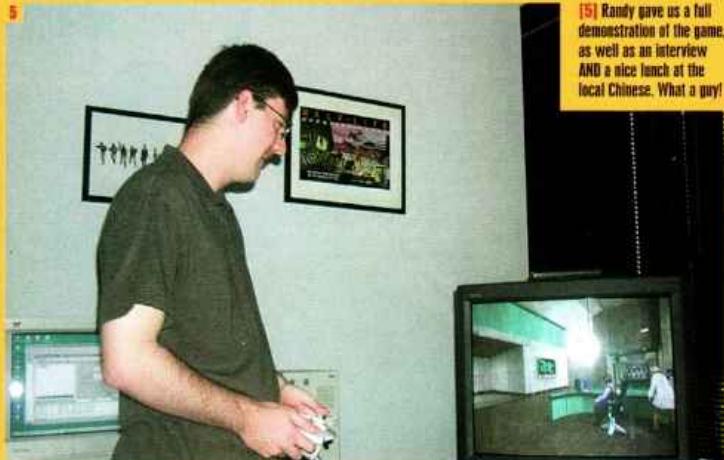
[1] Take this! And this! And some of this too!
Hahahaha! [2] You need to watch out for aliens teleporting in... they're everywhere! [3] There's nothing like the smell of high explosives in the morning. [4] One Helicopter + One Rocket Launcher = Big Kaboom.

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[5] Randy gave us a full demonstration of the game, as well as an interview AND a nice lunch at the local Chinese. What a guy!

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action of a game like *Quake III Arena* and the story-telling power of a Stephen King novel... and that can't be a bad thing.

The only fly in the proverbial ointment that we can see is the absence of online multiplayer options – not because they're definitely not there, but because we don't know if they're going to be included. The demo held in Texas focused on the single-player game... and that was it. No matter how hard we pressed (and we pressed hard, as you'll see in our exclusive interview) no one would let it

slip whether the beloved online play has been omitted or not. Apparently, "Sega will be making an announcement in the near future", but apart from that, we've got nothing. Nada. Zip... well, apart from a direct quote from the head honcho at Gearbox himself – "I do want to talk about it because it's really cool... but it's probably not a good idea." What? What's cool? That it's in? It's in, isn't it? Second-guess all you want but to be honest, we don't know – it looks like we're all just going to have to wait and see...



DM: Right, the big question. Considering this is the last interview you're going to give before the game actually comes out, we've got to ask you... online multiplayer play. Is it happening or not?

RP: Well, here's the thing – we've been working with Sega and we want the *Half-Life* multiplayer stuff done right. They're planning some sort of announcement about it and it's all going to be very exciting, which is why we're not talking about it because we don't want to blow it all. Sega and Sierra are planning something, so I've got nothing to do with that... what I can say is that from the beginning, there's been work done on it and it works to some degree. *Half-Life* multiplayer is a big part of the *Half-Life* experience and that's why it's important to make sure that it's delivered properly on the console. I obviously know what the score is, but I'm not going to talk about it – it's probably better that you wait for the press release. I do want to talk about it because it's really cool... but it's probably not a good idea.

DM: Exactly – they don't seem to have sorted themselves out over in the UK... back home, we've got *Chu Chu Rocket!* and that's about it, so far.

DM: Fair enough – we think that smile on your face says it all. From a personal standpoint though, if it didn't come out with online play do you think that would affect the way people saw the game, or should people understand the reasons why it wasn't included?

RP: I'm not sure... I do know that on the Dreamcast, people want to play online games. So far, most of the games I've played on the Dreamcast have been designed to be single-player games but one of the exciting things that Sega is doing is unveiling the Sega.net stuff and there have been a few announcements here and there. The big news hasn't really happened yet and I think that's the big deal – the Dreamcast has a modem built in, so they should be using it but they're not.

DM: Exactly – they don't seem to have sorted themselves out over in the UK... back home, we've got *Chu Chu Rocket!* and that's about it, so far.

RP: That's the same thing here, but in Japan there's plenty of games. What's interesting, though, is that if you look at

It's A War Out There

> Not surprisingly, *Half-Life* isn't the only first-person shoot-'em-up making its way to the Dreamcast in the near future. Now that it's been discovered that Sega's beloved machine can actually handle such games, the floodgates have opened and five titles are also in various stages of development. Here, for your delectation, is the cream of what you can expect pretty darn soon...

Quake III Arena

So then, *Quake III*. Never heard of it? If the answer to that question is 'Yes', you really should put this magazine down and go jump off a bridge... you scurvy heretic. As the original brought the world of the first-person shoot-'em-up into a new era, so *Quake III* managed to totally redefine what we understood by the term. A single-player game... with Deathmatch rules? We might have all laughed at the idea when they announced it but once it arrived, we discovered that the game truly rocks. And it's coming to the Dreamcast. With online play. Excited yet? You should be...



the sales figures in Japan, it isn't doing very well over there. What the Japanese gamers are saying is that they want the single-player stuff, which is the reason why as far as putting in new content goes, that's what we spent all of our time doing. We developed an entirely new single-player game featuring Barney, plus we've made tons of enhancements inside the original single-player game. We never talked about multiplayer at all – from the beginning of this project, no-one's even mentioned it. There are plans for it because it's part of the *Half-Life* community and obviously as PC developers, we care a lot about multiplayer so we want to make sure it's done properly on the Dreamcast. Like I said though, we're not really talking about it right now.

"Half-Life multiplayer is a big part of the experience... it's important to be sure it's delivered properly"

DM: Okay, point taken. Now obviously *Half-Life* was hugely popular on the PC and won a whole ton of Best Game awards – how that it's coming to the Dreamcast though, you've got to think that the people who own Dreamcasts are a different demographic to those that own PCs. Do you really think it's got the same appeal or are people just not going to get it?

RP: I think that there are going to be some people that are truly hardcore gamers – they've got PCs, Dreamcasts, PlayStations... everything. Those people... I think a portion of them will probably buy the Dreamcast version just to take advantage of the upgrades and play Barney because that's the only place where you're going to get to play it. Then you've got a portion of people

that don't have PCs, but love games – they get a console like the Dreamcast and they commit to it. Some of them may never have played a first-person game before and it's going to be interesting to see how they take to it; they might think that *GoldenEye* on the N64 was crazy when it came out and maybe this is going to be better... or it could be the other way around. I don't know. It's hard to tell, but I do know that *Half-Life* is a great game and it didn't win more than Fifty Game Of The Year awards because it was ordinary – it earned all of those awards and it would be a crime not to give it to as many players as possible, so that's the biggest reason why we decided to bring it to the Dreamcast.

DM: It's fine to talk about bringing it to the Dreamcast, but when are you doing it? Originally, the game was down for release in early September, but now it's slipped back and might not even make late October. Can you tell us when it's definitely going to hit the streets?

RP: The real attitude is that the game ships when it's ready – that's it. As

you're aware, it's a game under-development and I'm sure you've seen games that are in development in the past. It's really not ready yet and there's still a bit of work to be done, but comparatively, this game has done pretty well. I've worked on a lot of games that have been ported over from PC to consoles and some of the teams did quite a good job but this is probably the best console conversion that I've ever been a part of. It's also going to be pretty significant when it arrives, so I'm very proud of that aspect.

DM: So what's next for Gearbox? Got anything up your sleeve that you want to share with us?

RP: There is some stuff going on like *Team Fortress 2* – we've got some things that we're developing, but we haven't announced any of those titles yet and I don't think we're ready to. We'll probably be ready to announce some more stuff that we're working on soon...

DM: More Dreamcast titles?

RP: Perhaps... perhaps. We're looking in different directions and you know the way development works – we try things out and make a decision to commit to something that takes us further, until we've got enough where we want to show some stuff and we tell everyone about it. That's when the announcements are made, so obviously there are other developments on the Dreamcast – we've done all kinds of stuff. If you look closely, you'll see things written on whiteboards that may or may not be related to things in the pipeline and that just means that we're developing. When the announcements are made, that's when things are real – other than that, you don't know because projects can live or die after announcements are made. We'll probably talk again some time in the near future...

DM: Finally, a one-word answer – yes, no or maybe. *Half-Life 2*?

RP: I'm not going to say yes, but you know the answer to that question.



Unreal Tournament

In the eyes of many, this is the only other game (with the exception of *Half-Life*, obviously) that stands up to the might of the *Quake* franchise. According to those people at Dreamcast Towers that have experienced the joy that is *Unreal Tournament*, "It's not just about killing things, you know". Of course, they're damn right – featuring a whole host of things that set it apart from blast-fest games like *Quake III* (such as Assault, Domination and the ever-popular Capture The Flag) you'll need quick wits and an even quicker trigger finger if you want to succeed here. Oh, and did we mention that it's going to have online play features? Hell yeah!

Soldier Of Fortune

It wasn't quite the stalwart PC favourite that everyone thought it was going to be, but any game based on the exploits of a real-life mercenary gets the thumbs-up in our books. Ever fancied yourself as a bit of a hired gun, willing to sell your death-dealing services to the highest bidder? Well, now you can. All the locations, all the weapons and (most importantly) all the violence of the original game are being brought straight to the Dreamcast, courtesy of the lovely people at Grav Interactive. But does it have online play features? Well, we're not sure... yet. Believe us, you'll know as soon as we do...



OutTrigger

Following the amazing success of games like *Ferrari F355 Challenge*, *18 Wheeler* and *Shenmue*, AM2's take on the first-person shoot-'em-up looks set to kick serious arse. Yes, it might follow the story of an anti-terrorist group but in practice, we've got a major *Quake III* beater on our hands. Whether you play alone and take on the Mission mode (much like *Quake III*) or go for some multiplayer action through either online or split-screen play, the result is pretty much the same – tons of action, plenty of weapons and more explosions than you can shake a big stick at. We can hardly wait to see more on this beauty!

Take The Bullet

Right, let's get this straight. *Take The Bullet* has NOT been cancelled – we're not sure when it'll get here, but Sega is still working hard to bring this rather amazing-looking spy-style game to Dreamcast in the (slightly distant) future. Of course, we're at a bit of a loss about what else to say... because no one knows anything about the game. In fact, only two screenshots have been released so far so you know as much as we do. Still, that doesn't mean we're not working hard to try and get the dirt on *Take The Bullet* – we've got our spies hunting high and low for info, just for you. Hey, when have we ever lied to you?



cont. on page 39

HALF-LIFE

GORDON FREEMAN WASN'T THE ONLY HERO OF HALF-LIFE—TURNS OUT SECURITY GUARD BARNEY CALHOUN FOUGHT HIS WAY OUT OF THE ALIEN-INFESTED BLACK MESA RESEARCH COMPLEX, TOO. HERE'S HOW TO FOLLOW IN HIS FOOTSTEPS.

By Dan Elektro



THE BASICS

BREAK STUFF!

Bust up every crate and box you see. They often contain goodies like extra ammo and health packs—only rarely do they contain a nasty surprise.

RELOAD!



Reload often. Nothing's worse than being caught with an empty chamber simply because you didn't remember to fill it during a slow passage.

FLASHLIGHT!

Don't neglect your flashlight. You venture into some dark, scary areas that require some extra illumination. Just don't let your rechargeable battery run down...

LET'S GO!

Note: This ProStrategy Guide assumes you're playing Blue Shift on the Normal difficulty setting. Easy may have fewer enemies and Hard should have more. Also, every monster appearance isn't noted, so be prepared to face enemies as you explore. Major threats are listed, but there are several minor ones that are not.

INSECURITY

Password:
Barney Goes to Work



Your adventure begins with a tram ride. When you arrive at the door, watch the tram behind you while your pal tries to get the door open—Gordon Freeman will pass by.

MONSTERS!



Face huggers and the screaming dog-like things can be whacked with the crowbar if you're quick—and at the cost of one or two health points. If you can't spare those, use the automatic. The warping Cyclops, miniguns, and soldiers go down with two or three shotgun blasts or—if you're a good shot—one Magnum round.

DEFEND PEOPLE!

Always take scientists with you when you find them because they can help heal you when there are no other health packs around. Sometimes, they don't follow past a certain point, but that's okay.



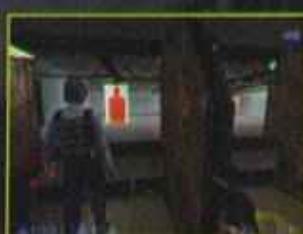
Before you head back to the elevator, check out the video surveillance area. See Gordon going to work! See the sample being delivered! Take the elevator again and hoof it to Sector G, back out the double doors you entered (follow the single green line). Take the maintenance ladder down to the high voltage cage and flip the switch inside, then go through the silver door directly opposite you.



Continue through the bowels of the maintenance area. You have to wait for the train to pass before you can lower the bridge. Eventually, you come to the Sector G Main Access Lift. Tap a button on the elevator's panel, and the real fun begins.

DUTY CALLS

Password: Red Is Scary



Once the door opens, head to the locker room and suit up—your armor and helmet await. The guard at the desk tells you to visit Sector G, but you need to visit the armory first. Follow the blue and green lines, and take the elevator. At the armory, pick up your pistol and all the loose clips at the firing range.



If you smash all the boxes, you'll eventually find a power box, which you should also destroy (now's a good time to use your flashlight). Keep an eye out for ammo on shelves, too.



The stairwell leads to a room flooded with toxic sludge. Hop over the tables (be ready for the face huggers) and talk to the scientist hiding on the storage room roof. The roof is the only safe place to detonate the red barrels that are blocking your exit from the room, so fire away from up high.



Cross the chasm and open the south entrance. Smash a few crates and find some health kits, as well as a few monsters. Once you sneak under the door, the only way out is up. You have to arrange the white crate, green drum, and two platforms to create a hopping pathway to the red ladder opposite the crane controls.



After the disaster, find the crowbar, as well as your first monsters (two squeakers) and health station (behind the boxes). Smash some of the crates and find a nice little easter egg—VMUs and copies of Sonic Adventure are among the computer supplies!

Be ready with the biggest gun you have ammo for (you should soon have a machine gun, anyway).



Once you clear out the camo guys, grab the health kits from the office and be sure to look for the ammo in the locker. Make your way down the hall and up the stairwell; you should find plenty of health in the first floor storage room. You're going to need that health when the soldiers on the stairs above you decide to attack. Be ready!



There are even more enemy troops outside—five of them. You're outmanned and outgunned, so this is an excellent place to save your progress (if you haven't lately). It's gonna be a tough standoff at the doorway, which probably takes a few tries. Watch for incoming grenades as well as those red gas cans in the room (which you can push out the door and set up as bombs).



If you survive, you'll meet the sixth man—a sniper on the second-floor window in the building you just left. Take him out, and then climb the dumpster when he tries to jump through his window. The Yard Manager's office leads to a security locker, which is chock full of ammo and weapons you need for the next firefight that's literally waiting around the corner. Let the soldiers rush through the door and pick them off with the shotgun one by one (use the alt-fire to get them faster).

Fight through a few more monsters and reach ladder B-03, which takes you to the drainage canal. Take the bridge to your right and jump up to the ladder. At the top, turn the valve. Head left and take the other ladder down to the walkway, where you find the second valve. Those two valves turn off the spewing steam pipes you passed above. But don't head back up yet—grab the shotgun at the end of the walkway you're on, then head back and up. The walkway leads to a health station and a switch that controls the elevator on the opposing platform. Blast the nasties that come down on it, then head way back to the canal.



This clears your way through the turbines and gives you the first glimpse of sunlight in a while—as well as the chance to be a star witness.

CAPTIVE FREIGHT

Password:
Combat and Training



Finally, the surface—but keep your head down and bolt right as soon as you reach topside. The keypad opens the double doors, where you find a grisly SUV; be sure to pop the trunk and collect all the goodies in the area, including the Magnum pistol.

From there, it's off to a slimy firefight against several baddies. Be sure to trip the generator control switch before you leave the muck; otherwise, the elevator won't work. You eventually come to the elevator you triggered from across the chasm about 15 minutes ago; there may still be a monster or two lurking there, so be careful. However, the warning sign on the wall tells you all you need to know: Push the explosive crate into the canal.



Near the electric hallway intersection, be sure you open all crates—one of the big crates is blocking a first aid station. As for the electric hallway itself, the best way past it is to run! Time it right, and you come through only slightly scathed. Once you reach the end of the path, blast the fire barrel, and then arrange the metal crates as stairs to gain access to the ducts.



Face huggers live in air ducts, so have your flashlight and crowbar handy. The vents end at a storage room. Head to the left and down, and collect the ammo and armor from the previous unlucky guard.



As you turn the corner and go up the stairs, however, be ready for a shock—armed troops firing at you!

Back at the intersection where you entered, head to the left and up the ladder. You come to a room with sticky-tongue monsters in it; shoot them, and then jump in the water. Swim to the right, past the broken grate, and turn the Flow Control valve. The room floods, and you can hop onto the green barrels to reach the platform.



After a treacherous balance on the pipe, you find yourself facing some mutated scientists; use the shotgun—there's more ammo in a nearby crate—and be ready to backpedal.





Across the hall, you can find health in the boxes. And in those nearby covered crates is more crucial stuff—grenades, remote bombs, and health—but your real target is the freight cars. The red one contains scientists, which is good; the blue one contains four aliens and an icy floor, which is bad. A grenade might help. The storage room at the right rear corner of the room contains more soldiers, plus a pathway to the freight yard, which is absolutely teeming with soldiers. Once again, hang back at the doorway and blast 'em as they come through. The crates in the yard replenish your firepower, so fire away and don't be afraid to take a little damage.



In the yard, a scientist is trapped in the red car. To rescue him, smash the blocks on the spools and let them roll away. Use your pistol, though—otherwise, you'll be crushed! Once the scientist is free, keep him there to keep him safe, because a second wave of soldiers storms through the giant door. You can take out a lot of them with the chaingun mounted on one of the rail cars—the chaingun is inside the green crate, if you haven't smashed that in a firefight yet. The gun never runs out of ammo!



Once the area is cleared, head down the train tracks for yet another ambush...oh yeah, and then there's that tank. Once you clear out the soldiers, the tank's turret wakes up for a smackdown.



Lucky for you, the truck in front of you contains a rocket launcher—three or four rockets should do the trick. Your reward for taking the tank down is plenty of health and more ammo.



The door on the far wall leads to another track tunnel—this time with a turret in it to the right (throw a quick grenade). The other end of the tunnel contains crates, one of which hides CO2 canisters in it. Blow up the crates with a remote bomb to create a nice hole in the door so you can escape.



Of course, you're escaping only into another firefight. Take care of the opposing force and replenish your armor at the turntable control room. Fiddle with the controls in order to reveal a red car with a certain Doctor trapped inside of it. Drive the train into Bay 5 and meet the man himself, at last. He tells you the plan for the rest of the game.



Follow Dr. Rosenberg's advice for getting out of your current jam; it's just one on three, so you should be okay. The door on the other side of the roundhouse is now unlocked,

The Doc leads you up the stairs, after which point you must guard him closely as you venture back to the building where you first encountered the soldiers. Don't get too far ahead of the Doc; if you do, he'll complain. Stick with him, and he shows you a secret—the lost elevator. Take the elevator and hit the security room for more supplies. Then follow Rosenberg and listen to him carefully—you're going on a trip.

FOCAL POINT

PASSWORD
Barney Visits Zen



Welcome to outer space. Barney. Gravity is lighter here, so be careful how you jump. Luckily, there's a glowing blue healing pool nearby. Climb the rock pile to reach the footbridge, then sneak into the small opening in the cave. Mind the swaying plants: They'll attack if you get too close, and you can't kill them. Crouch and move slowly past.



You encounter more nasties in the network of small tunnels. When you find a tunnel that ends in slimy water, tongue monsters, and a healing pool, you know you're on the path out. From there, it's time to practice your platform jumping in low gravity. Save your game right now, 'cause this could get frustrating.



While you jump, be wary of incoming enemies—the warping lightning beasts take an interest in you. There's more jumping ahead, too. Some platforms float up and down, so be sure to time your jumps correctly. On the second

set of platforms, be sure to suck up all the health you need from the pool. And don't fall for the fake exit—you need to cross the green stalk to get out. Look out for the swinging creature, though!



There are more of those annoying things when you come up out of the water, along with a mini-gator. Jump over the falls and use the fleshy bounce pad to get to the other side where you can find more health and a huge ammo pack. Follow the water, then head upstream, climbing rocks and shooting creatures as you go.



When you come to some of the scientists' equipment, turn on the power, and then search the nearby tunnel for plenty of health and, in one closed chest, more ammo stashes. Return to the equipment in the clearing and set the dials so that the yellow triangle markers are in the red shaded areas on the radar screens.



The moment you set the dials, you're ambushed by lightning-throwers and a flying creature. Fire away! You can find some more ammo and health by the nearby foliage. Once you've disposed of everybody, head back into the tunnel and blast the last creature; it should cause a rockslide, and climbing the rubble is your way out. When you land on a health pool, watch for face huggers while you stand there.



At the end of the tunnel is a chasm and more flying creatures; use the rifle for best results. Use the bounce pad only if you need more ammo. The path leads up and is littered with face huggers; have a pistol or crowbar ready, then switch to heavier weaponry for the lightning-throwers. Eventually, you should return to where you started, and the portal is open. Don't think and don't stop to fight—just jump! Home at last—but Rosenberg has a new assignment for you, so listen up. Take the elevator down and take care of business.

POWER STRUGGLE

Password:

Powers: II: In progress



Start blasting as soon as you open the door, then collect some fresh armor and ammunitions. Other survivors are nearby; watch their predicament in horror. Head over to the cooling facility door and prepare for a military assault, 'cause aliens don't use welding torches.



The cardboard boxes just beyond the assault hold health, and there's a proper first aid station near the bridge. Cross it and thread your way through the maze of rooms. When you reach the red ladder, lob a grenade to the level above and clear out the area. You soon come to the coolant pool. You can't hop over the barrels, and the TNT line is cut. However, there's a metal drum in the corner—push the drum onto the clipped wire in order to complete the circuit, then push the plunger.



Drain the pool of coolant fluid, take the elevator down, and rearrange the barrels in the center of the room, over the grate.



Your goal is to make a floating bridge for when you refill the coolant. There are only four barrels, so it shouldn't take long to set up. When the barrels are in place, head back up, refill the pool, and cross the chasm. Tricky, huh?



Once you're through, barde the lightning guys and head to the room with the coolant spill. Let the big guy take out the soldiers, dispatch him with a grenade or two, and then hide behind the crates and stay low. Another big lug arrives when you finally reach the power room—grenades work well, again, or a rocket. Power up both units by using the control panel, and the turbines kick in.



Cross back over the coolant-barrel bridge and hightail it outta there. Return to the waterfall and move the bridge to the upper level. That leads you to the power cell charging station and a fresh battery, which is just what

Rosenberg needs. Juice the battery up, slap it into the payload elevator, send it on its way, and then rejoin the good Doctor yourself by heading back up the elevator you came down in.

A LEAP OF FAITH

Password:
Physics Is Beautiful



Rosenberg gives you instructions on how, where, and when to help him with the controls for the rescue attempt. Keep yourself well armed, though, as you have some unwanted visitors.



Naturally, you're the last to go through the portal—and that's when the soldiers come storming in. Two are on the catwalk, so be ready for them with a rifle—but watch out for the door they blow open. There are more military men on the floor and at the doorway, but if you plant a remote bomb ahead of time, you'll take them out from afar.



That's the final threat. Leap through the portal and enjoy the end of the story...and your secret infinite ammo code (Dreamcast Gives Fire-power). ☺



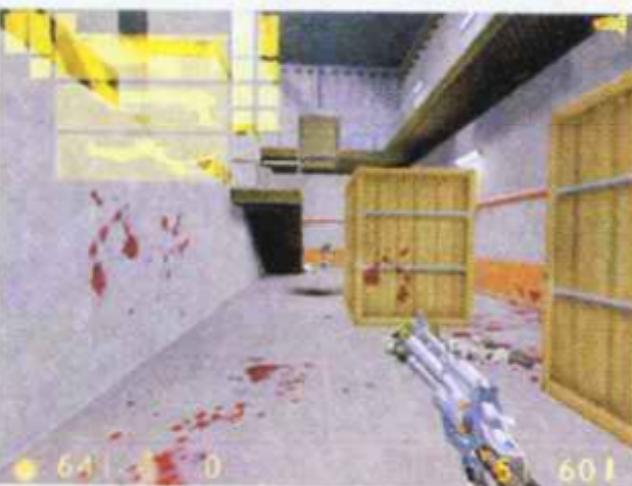
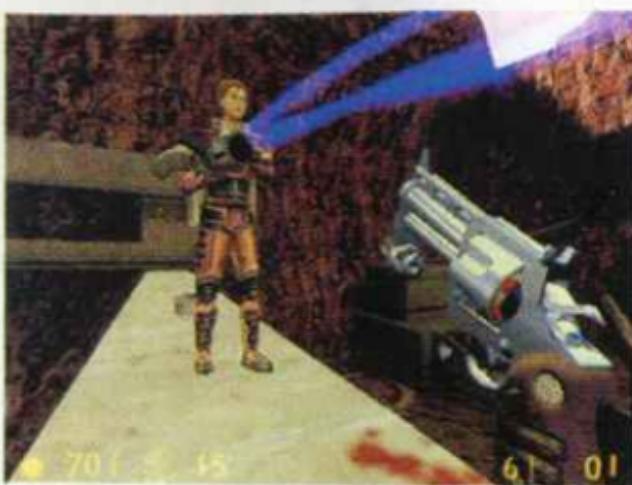
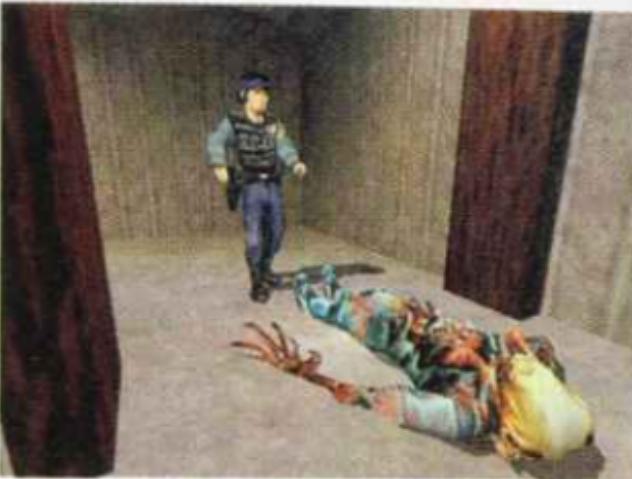
Half-Life

The critically acclaimed, totally kick-ass PC game Half-Life is headed to the DC this **summer**. This first-person shooter is no Doom or Quake clone—with lifelike environments, various characters to interact with, an immersive story line and a tense (almost survival-horrorish) atmosphere, this masterpiece has changed the FPS genre forever.

Now, **Sierra Studios** is bringing the experience home to console owners, with development help from **Captivation Digital Laboratories**, **Gearbox Software** and **Valve**. They're going to improve a few things to take advantage of the DC's power, like up the polygon count and dress up the lighting effects a bit. This version will also feature an all-new, exclusive one-player mission that centers around one of the security guards of the facility that gets attacked by other-worldly creatures.

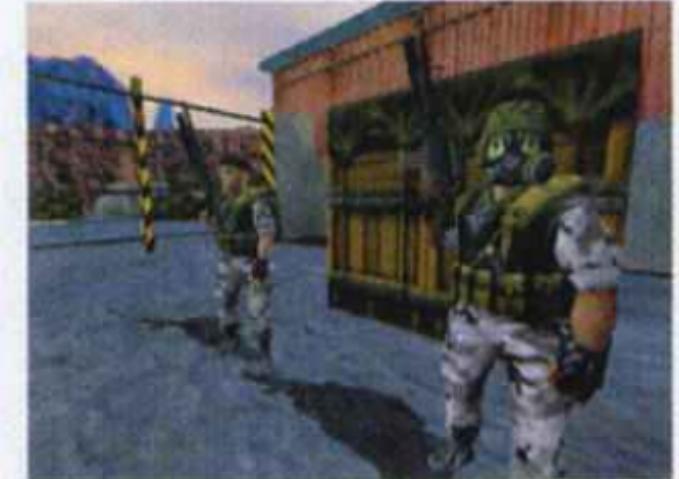
We don't have anything to report on the multiplayer aspect (if any). Still, the one-player game is worth checking out all on its own.

Shown here are screens from the PC version of the game.



Half Life

Even though this **late-summer** release from **Sierra Studios** and **Captivation Digital Laboratories** is essentially a port of the amazing PC version, there are a number of DC-specific enhancements being made. Look for an all-new one-player mission created by **Gearbox Software** (the team behind the Opposing Force add-on for the PC), new visual effects and a higher polygon count. By the way, these *are* DC screens.



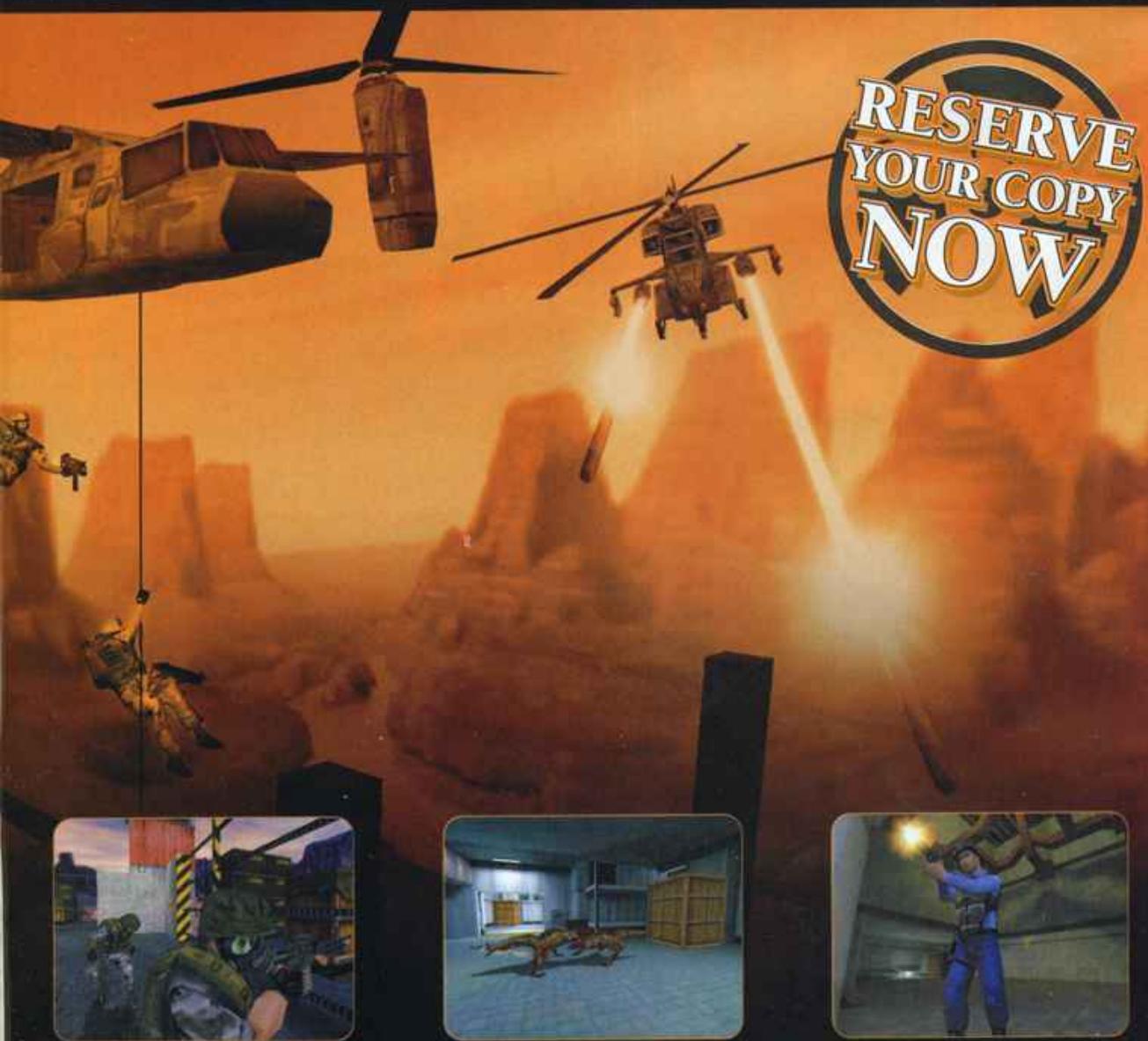
HΛLF



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Half-Life features new characters, weapons, and enhanced effects specially designed to exploit the power of the Sega Dreamcast

Half-Life's incredibly advanced AI is used to fill the game with uncomfortably realistic adversaries

Intelligent characters and intense story create an experience unlike any other action game ever made



DEVELOPED BY
VALVE

SIERRA
STUDIOS

Sega Dreamcast.

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HALF-LIFE

¡explosión inminente!

A medida que vamos tachando días en el calendario va quedando menos para que podamos ver un precioso disco de «Half-Life» girando en nuestra Dreamcast. El avance del trabajo de conversión marcha imparable, y ahora acabamos de conocer nuevos datos de este esperadísimo shooter en primera persona por boca de Randy Pitchford, su diseñador jefe.

La primera gran noticia es que nuestra versión de «Half-Life» no sólo va a incluir el juego original, como sabéis recibió numerosos premios al mejor juego del año cuando salió en PC, sino que también va a incluir todo un nuevo episodio desarrollado en exclusiva para la consola de Sega. Según nos contó Pitchford, «este episodio se llamará «Half-Life: Guard Duty», y su argumento girará alrededor del guardia de seguridad Barney. Los jugadores podrán experimentar la acción en las instalaciones de investigación de Black Mesa desde una perspectiva completamente diferente, puesto que visitarán zonas nuevas de la base». En realidad, la duración de este episodio será algo menor que la del original, pero tendrá sus propios retos, con lo que al final seguro se comió si nos llevásemos a casa dos juegos por el precio de uno. ¿A qué suena bien?

Otro dato que interesaría seguir a muchos de los que ya habéis jugado a la versión de PC es el control. ►



La perspectiva en primera persona nos va a acompañar durante toda la aventura. ¿Y este lo que está mirando?

Dreamcast se prepara para darle la bienvenida a uno de los juegos más esperados. ¿Listo para la batalla?

www.segasaturno.com



El modo individual de la versión de Dreamcast vendrá con una sorpresa: un nuevo capítulo programado en exclusiva para nuestra consola.

► El amigo Pitchford (ya tiene confianza, ¿no?) comenta que «el mando de Dreamcast ha resultado ser bastante intuitivo. Por supuesto, la versión final del juego permitirá personalizar las opciones de configuración y, para aquellos jugadores que tienen la versión para PC y quieren disfrutar de la versión para Dreamcast, el objetivo es que «Half-Life» sea compatible con el teclado de la consola, y también con el nuevo ratón que va a salir al mercado».

Un último aspecto que querímos comentar con Randy Pitchford es saber lo que el parce Dreamcast a la gente que lleva varios años programando y su respuesta no pudo ser más clara: «Es una máquina maravillosa. Renderiza los polígonos rápidamente, incluye módem y cuenta con un sistema de desarrollo que resulta muy familiar para los que estamos acostumbrados a programar para PC».

En fin, que estamos impacientes por ver cómo queda todo, porque el juego apenas le quedan unas semanas para estar terminado. ¡Todos listos para entrar en combate!



¡MEJOR QUE EL ORIGINAL!

Las características técnicas de la versión de Dreamcast van a ser superiores a las del juego original. En palabras de Pitchford, «dado que el hardware de Dreamcast tiene un rendimiento muy superior a los requisitos mínimos del sistema para la versión de PC, ha sido posible mejorar el diseño del juego. En particular los modelos, gracias a una mayor resolución y articolación».

Una buena noticia, ¿verdad? Pues vamos a ver cómo se lleva la práctica con la ayuda de la imagen que os mostramos aquí abajo y del propio Pitchford: «Si, por ejemplo, comparámos los nuevos soldados mejorados para Dreamcast (derecha) con los soldados del juego original (izquierda), podemos apreciar más detalles del rostro del armado, el equipamiento de su cinturón e incluso de la expresión de su rostro. La mayoría de las armas han sido mejoradas y también se han introducido algunas nuevas, como la ametralladora M4 con lanzagranadas incorporada o la pistola automática Beretta». Como veis, todo estará pensado para que el juego sea un bombo.



EL JUEGO ON-LINE LEVANTA POLEMICA

Justo cuando estábamos recopilando información para realizar este reportaje descubrimos en Internet un rumor de lo más inquietante: las partidas on-line podrían quedar fuera de la versión de «Half-Life» para Dreamcast.

Siguen diciendo estas especulaciones, la necesidad de tener el juego acabado en las fechas previstas podría provocar que sus creadores optasen por prescindir de los modos de juego en Internet.

De cualquier forma, como a nosotros nadie nos ha confirmado oficialmente esta noticia, esperamos que no pase de ser una pesadilla veraniega producto de alguna mente calenturiente. Y es que, como todos sabéis, es precisamente en las partidas on-line donde reside uno de los grandes atractivos de «Half-Life».



Fijarse en los detalles del rostro de este soldado. La sorprendente de las texturas utilizadas va a permitir que al realismo de los gráficos alcance niveles casi inauditos.







DC

PC

—



REDFORT

2011-11-15

HALF-LIFE

PREPARE YOURSELF
FOR THE ULTIMATE
MULTIPLAYER
DREAMCAST EXPERIENCE

TEXT: EVAN SHAMON
PHOTO: MICHAEL SEXTON

 FOR THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, rumors concerning Gearbox Software's version of Half-Life have besieged the Internet like a swarm of angry hornets. Word had it that corporate pressure would force the game to come for the Christmas season, and that the original game's creators were to be the resulting casualty. So, determined to set the story straight, we used our mad telepathy skills to barge directly into the headquarters of Gearbox Software (located in the same building as the creators of Half-Life [and to the only fishing location near manufacturing plant in America]). Armed with nothing but a mini-recorder, a digital camera and our trusty DSCM camcorder (in case of cows), we infiltrated the heavily-guarded Gearbox Headquarters and came back with an exclusive report from the front lines.

LIKE A BOX OF RASSIN BRAIN, this report contains not one but TWO scoops of chewy goodness. Scoop 1: The game will be released in two separate packages. The first, due for release this November, will include a graphically enhanced version of Half-Life, plus an entirely new adventure entitled Blue Shift developed specifically for Dreamcast. Scoop 2: Shortly thereafter—January of 2001-ish—Sierra will release a separate MULTIPLAYER game, which will include Opposing Force, Team Fortress 1.5, Half-Life multiplayer and possibly even Counter-Strike.

What does it all mean? Clear the lane, suckas.

>>



HALF-LIFE

"APPARENTLY, THE GOVERNMENT'S ID



GET A HALF-LIFE
In the history of electronic entertainment, there have been a few scattered titles that have managed to reflect as many helplessly devoted fans as *Half-Life*. The game's success has been carried over from the *Half-Life* of years from both the press and game community, and has carried on to the *Half-Life* of critics, judges and juries. *Joy*, *PC Gamer*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *GameSpot*, *Gaming Gazette*, and *that* feel that *Half-Life* is the best game ever made. *Half-Life* is played more than *Quake 3*, *StarCraft*, *Call of Duty: Black Ops*, and *Fable 2* combined. And that's about as far as it gets.

This game is very hard to beat.

And it's coming in a very big way.

THE FULL STORY

Half-Life is a first-person adventure game, part science-fiction, part science-fiction novel by Max Landis (*Half-life*). The game is set in the year 2016, and is centered on the Black Mesa Research Facility, a top-secret government research base and site of a hibernated alien life-form.

As the young research scientist Gordon Freeman, you're sent to analyze a mysterious crystalline material found on Earth. Little do you know what proceeds to go horribly wrong. And so the adventure begins.

As horrific disasters pour through rifts in the fabric of reality, Gordon must navigate through the chaos of living sirens and scientists. By emitting



panicked security guards and scientists, he must make his way through high-tech laboratories, secret rooms, and Cold War era bunkers and airlocks, fighting through subterranean railroads and ruined research facilities.

And then the feels get involved.

As one of your fellow scientists says, "Apparently, [the government] is idea of containment is to kill everyone involved."

HIGHER THAN HALFLIFE
Half-Life meets *X-Files* meets *Aliens*—and you're in total control of the action. Gordon's mission is to find the truth behind the alien invasion, and to stop them from taking over the world.



your life. You'll gather a custom arsenal of new high-powered military-grade weapons, and as you explore further areas of Black Mesa, you will encounter a new variety of human

soldier and alien to ultimate Gordon Freeman. You are responsible for saving the world, and you can do it alone amidst the chaos. It's quickly revealed that these Highly Advanced Life Forms are hell-bent on taking over the world, and as Gordon makes his way across the globe, he will return to Earth via the Black Mesa facility when Gordon Freeman, and his team of resistance fighters, are forced to defend the planet from the forces of Ann.

So where did we originally end up? Black Mesa to witness Freeman and his fellow scientists in the facility, you now find yourself in a new dimension. This dimension has new creatures and a variety of other foes in an effort to save

OF CONTAINMENT IS TO KILL EVERYONE INVOLVED."



gameplay, and the fact that the plot remains significant throughout the entire experience. As the game progresses, the real beauty of this game is in the responses it evokes in its players: sweaty palms, racing hearts, and a sense of political, religious, and personal meaning.

The *trick*? *Half-Life*'s story never gets in the way of its action. It's a game that's designed to be a fast-paced, linear adventure title that's the perfect intermediary level of interaction between story and

principles of rock solid game design—and for once, being principled pays off.

SMART FELLERS

Of course, the most lauded aspect of *Half-Life* is its AI, or Artificial Intelligence. Thanks to Valve's unique and innovative artificial intelligence, both friendly and foes alike move in a sophisticated and unpredictable manner. Friendly soldiers and scientists help you

when they can, while enemies plan viciously against you. Unlike nearly every other first-person shooter on the market, *Half-Life* is a game that's built around a subtle artifice and design decisions, the overall intention of the game's design principles has become increasingly impossible to dislodge. Caches of weapons and ammo, for example, are placed in

What holds the entire package together is the way in which the game never loses sight of the story. Even when the game is at its most action-oriented, it's still a subtle artistic and design decision, the overall intention of the game's design principles has become increasingly impossible to dislodge. Caches of weapons and ammo, for example, are placed in

>

HALF-LIFE: THE PROGENY

The original *Half-Life* has spawned more than 100+ spin-offs of PC games and mobile titles, and has expanded the storyline via a shared virtual universe. OC creators will receive virtual currency, and may even receive a copy of the original *Half-Life*.

OPOSING FORCE

In *Half-Life: Opposing Force*, players return to the Black Mesa Research Facility on Corporate Admin Shepard. As a

TEAM FORTRESS CLASSIC 1.6

Team Fortress Classic (TFC) is the most popular modder addition to *Half-Life* that has become one of the most popular first-person shooters ever. It's a mod that's been around since 1999, and is considered one of the most popular additions to the game. It's a mod that's been around since 1999, and is considered one of the most popular additions to the game.

match maps and times of strategies for each team. TFC is a modding community for those that take the time to master the mechanics of the game. It's a mod that's been around since 1999, and is considered one of the most popular additions to the game.

BLUE SHIFT
Blue Shift is an entirely new update to the *Half-Life* engine, specifically for the Dreamcast version of the game (yet another reason why the game is so popular). It's a mod that's been taken on the role of Barney, the Black Mesa security guard, and play through the original *Half-Life* levels, but with a new twist. It's a new map-making device, used most recently by Quentin Tarantino to decide *Brown*. Seeing the game from *Brown's*

perspective, the game is a

HALF-LIFE

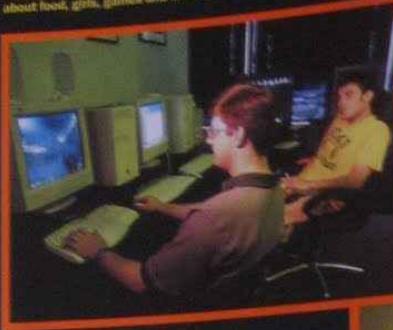
random points throughout the map; rather, players must discover hidden stockpiles of weapons, and swipe ammo from the bodies of 'expired' enemies. Likewise, there are no traditional levels in *Half-Life*—the game is a continuous stream of linked locations from beginning to end, each one connected to the next. You can, of course, move back and forth between these areas—but so can the bastards who are out to get you.

Unlike many other first-person games, each area in *Half-Life* is furnished with a wide variety of textures, lending a distinct look to the different locations. The numerous scripted events within each of these levels serve to bolster the illusion of reality, and the detail within each scene effectively maintains the level of suspense. While much of the gameplay is puzzle-oriented, these puzzles always seem contextually plausible within the world that Valve has created. Which is quite a significant achievement; most first-person games—despite obvious efforts in this direction—simply can't elicit the willing suspension of disbelief that makes *Half-Life* so compelling. Valve has obviously learned a great deal studying the mistakes of the past.

THE GUILTY PARTIES

Santa's got more people working on Dreamcast *Half-Life* than Jerry Bruckheimer's got rewriting the screenplay for his next \$100 million blockbuster (*Movie NewsBreak*: Early word says that things blow up). While Captivation Digital Laboratories churns away at porting the code and optimizing it for DC hardware, Gearbox Software is adding Dreamcast-specific elements and enhancements—not the least of which is an entirely new mission (see *The Progeny* sidebar, page 44). And from atop their lofty perch in Seattle, the folks

A typical day at an office not unlike ODCM's. While others are actually making progress on their projects, Evan chooses to use his time more constructively (i.e., daydreaming about food, girls, games and an endless string of fart jokes).



at Valve Software are overseeing the whole process. Suffice to say, booting up *Half-Life* will involve sitting through many corporate lobbies in order to finally get to the game.

So what's the romp?

"Well, there have been some PC games brought over to Dreamcast that weren't treated very well," Gearbox CEO Randy Pitchford pointed out. "But then there have been things like *Crazy Taxi*—ported from the arcade—which is, obviously, incredible. That's really what we're going for here."

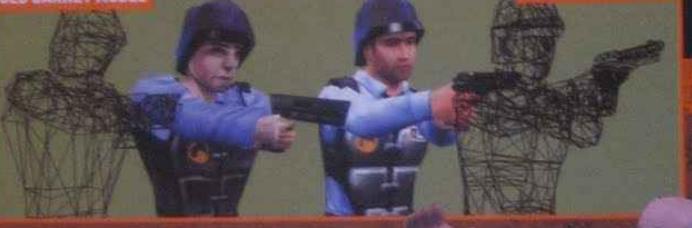
Most immediately apparent are the various graphical upgrades. Characters, weapons and monsters in the game have been completely rebuilt, using higher resolution models and more detail. Says Pitchford, "The result is that all of the creatures and people in the game look much more realistic



Gearbox founders Randy Pitchford, Lead Game Designer/CEO (above) and Brian Marin, Art Czar (left) strike a pose for us. These two have worked on AAA titles, from Civilization to Duke Nukem 3D.

"SCIENTISTS WEAR INDIVIDUALLY RENDERED COATS AND TIES"

OLD BARNEY MODEL



NEW BARNEY MODEL



and have more animation articulation than they ever have before." Additionally, the lighting will be richer, and colors more vibrant. After an up-close and personal tour of their efforts, we were



suitably impressed (see *Double Your Pleasure* sidebar, left).

In terms of control, the developers are working hard to perfect the system using the standard Dreamcast control pad. While they



will, of course, support the Dreamcast mouse and keyboard combo—certainly the ideal setup for *Half-Life* or any other first-person shooter—Pitchford wants to provide mouse-less gamers with the same play-value. "We realize that not everyone is going to buy the mouse, and we want those people to have the same great control and gameplay experience." It's a great goal, and far from impossible: as *Bloware* essentially proved with its DC version of *MDK2*.

To this end, Gearbox is furiously play-testing its game with Dreamcast controllers instead of mice and keyboards—no easy transition for this PC-based team. The goal? Using a control pad should not affect fun, bar none.

DOUBLE YOUR PLEASURE

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT VISUAL UPGRADE ON GEARBOX'S agenda was the overhaul of *Half-Life*'s in-game models.

"The original game was built to run on a Pentium 133 with 24 megs of RAM," Pitchford points out. "Well, the Dreamcast has built-in PowerVR—very nice hardware—and the built-in ability to render polys really nicely. So we did the math."

Literally, Gearbox is rebuilding all of the models—including the humans, monsters and weapons—with double the number of polys that Valve used in the original PC game, and the difference is quite stunning. Scientists, for example, wear individually-rendered lab coats and ties, rather than one flat, continuous texture. No longer do these characters look like polygonal caricatures—they now appear as living, breathing human (and non-human) beings. Monsters are more frightening, humans more lifelike, weapons more entertaining. In a demonstration, we watched old and new games running side-by-side—and the contrast is truly striking.



HALF-LIFE**"THE ONLINE EXPERIENCE WILL BE EXCELLENT"****MULTIPLAYER**

For the past several months, we had been hearing word that Sierra was planning to axe the multiplayer elements of Dreamcast's *Half-Life*. The rumors had us worried; while *Half-Life* was originally conceived as a story-based, single-player experience, the online elements have since become absolutely essential gaming—easily one of the most fun, rewarding and exhilarating experiences you can have online (without breaking any of those pesky "Age of Consent" laws). So, after signing our lives away on the dotted line of Sierra's Non-Disclosure Agreement, we got the dish—which, actually, turned out to be more like a five-course meal.

As mentioned before, the second package will include Gearbox's own award-winning expansion pack *Opposing Force*, the hugely popular online MOD *Team Fortress Classic*, and *Half-Life*'s original multiplayer elements (for in-depth descriptions, see *The Progeny* sidebar on page 44). The game will incorporate the recently-released version of Valve's updated online code, which enables gamers with a 56k connection (read: Dreamcast owners) to play the game smoothly over the Internet. "Especially for those gamers using SegaNet," Valve's own Doug Lombardi tells us, "the online experience will be excellent." The team expects to include support for broadband as well—assuming Sega gives them something to work with.

What does all of it mean? Well, it means that once we've spent our respective winter breaks playing through the single-player *Half-Life* missions, we'll be graced with more *Half-Life* multiplayer madness than we'll know what to do with. Let the games begin. ☺



Step through one of these trip lasers and you're in the deep poop zone. Nearly every stage of *Half-Life* is littered with cool traps and obstacles, which require quick thinking to get past (not to mention an assortment of crowbars, 9mm pistols, revolvers, assault rifles, shotguns, crossbows, RPGs, gauss rifles, gluon guns, hornets, grenades, trip mines, satchel charges and snarks. And the SAW machine guns, sniper rifles, disintegrators, shock roaches, spore launchers, pipe wrenches, baracules, knives and desert eagles of Opposing Force).

INTERVIEW MARC LAIDLAW**"EVERYONE I KNOW LIKES STORIES"**

Marc Laidlaw is the author of a fail-down Philip K. Dick-influenced sci-fi novel, *Including the 37th Mandala*. He was introduced to gaming while writing a *Virtue* cover story on Quake, and later joined Valve as a writer and game designer. For more Marc Laidlaw, check out: www.luckygames.com/content/1/24/fest/

Did you find it difficult to write for a videogame?

A lot of what I contributed to *Half-Life* had very little to do with actual writing. It had a lot more to do with understanding the process of creating a game, putting a creative project over a long period of time. I drew on what I learned there to tell others stories, the importance of rough drafts and revisions, both of which have important parallels in game creation. We didn't get a good sense of what *Half-Life* would be until we'd roughed out the entire game. And we couldn't really get inventive and insanely inspired until we were well into the revision and refinement process, feeling confident that everything we were doing would play some important role in the gamer's experience.

Are you pleased with the reaction to the storytelling in *Half-Life*?

Very pleased. I think a lot of people felt that the 3D shooter didn't need a storyline—that it would be wasted on the kind of people who play such things. But everyone I know likes stories. I couldn't imagine that gamers wouldn't like having a story if it deepened their involvement in the game instead of booting them out of it. Games currently receive the kind of condemnation and societal disapproval previously reserved for pulp science fiction and comic books; not surprisingly, my sympathies have always naturally lain with science fiction and comics. Society as a whole underestimates and misapprehends our intentions and ambitions. I guess that's the habitual alien/outsider/geek in me speaking.

I think that's the habitual alien/outsider/geek in me speaking. I think I just walked all over your question.

Where do you think the game industry is headed? Do you think the concept of a "game writer" is going to be the norm in a few years?

Well, we saw a rash of people in that direction a couple years ago, when a lot of Hollywood talent seemed to be moving into games (William Morris painted "Multimedia Games" on a door), and then it pattered out (William Morris got out the paint thinner and scrubbed that door really hard). I remember that *Psychic Detective* was supposed to be a case of make-it or break-it for the so-called interactive movie, and that model was clearly broken. It had good writing, but it was boring to play. I don't think Hollywood really "got" games. I believe many game designers understand the importance of good writing to their products, but they don't necessarily know how to find good writers who also care to understand good game design. Perhaps there aren't that many of us yet. There will certainly be more in time. I think interesting things happen when good writers get involved not just in scripting dialog, but in all aspects of game design. At the same time, writing/storytelling is just one element in a complex mix. It's not inherently more important than any other factor, but I think that in the future the quality of storytelling will start to be something that gamers think about critically, just as they currently notice if the weapon balance is all wrong or the puzzles don't make sense. When I was a kid, game design was not a possible option for me; it wasn't even a blip on anybody's radar. I wanted to be a writer, so I read books. These days, conceivably, there's some fresh-faced teenager Laidlaw-equivalent playing *Half-Life* and deciding that he or she wants to do this kind of thing, and that kid is going to grow up to make amazing games (or whatever the enlightened people of the future might call their weird futuristic form of entertainment). That's where the next generation of game writers is likely to come from.

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HALF-LIFE
 Dreamcast™







DREAMCAST

Shooter traz roteiro extra e gráficos ainda melhores!

Half-Life

9.8

Controle - meio complexo	9
Diversão - Blue Shift	10
Gráfico - cenários incríveis	10
Som - provoca calafrios	10

Sierra
Ação
1 Jogador

HALF-LIFE



Por Baby Betinho

Eis que *Half-Life* finalmente saiu do PC para dar o ar da graça no Dreamcast. Jogadores de qualquer plataforma ficarão deslumbrados, pois o game permite que você encarne dois personagens diferentes. Seguindo a história do PC, você poderá ser o cientista Morgan Freeman, aprisionado num laboratório subterrâneo semidestruído e infestado de alienígenas. A novidade fica por conta do roteiro *Blue Shift*, em que você viverá um segurançista de patente baixa que está aprisionado em outro ponto do laboratório e tenta



DICA: use o pé-de-cabra para abrir caixas e massacrizar certos inimigos menos perigosos



DICA: cuidado com os monstros linguarudos que ficam no teto, especialmente em locais com escadas

DICA: sempre recarregue sua arma manualmente em áreas seguras



DICA: ao ser acompanhado por um guarda, proteja-o e deixe que ele atire bastante nos inimigos

encontrar um meio de salvar a própria pele. Embora não haja modo Multiplayer, esses dois roteiros irão garantir muitas horas de jogatina intensa. Medo é a palavra-chave de *Half-Life*. Poucos são os jogos em que você não se sente seguro em lugar algum! Ao andar num corredor, as paredes poderão rachar, e monstros pularão em você. Outras criaturas agirão em equipe e tostarão você com um relâmpago verde. Em vez dos quebra-cabeças padrão, tipo ache-a-chave-e-abra-a-porta, os desafios de *Half-Life* são muito mais originais e adequados ao ambiente. A trilha sonora eventual, mas marcante, aprimora a atmosfera de tensão do game, com fortes doses de violência. A qualidade gráfica ficou melhor que a do PC, e os diálogos convencem com sentimentos que variam do desespero ao sarcasmo!



corner and see one and you've got a rocket launcher, it's going to yip and run away because it's not stupid. It won't just see you and automatically attack. That's boring. Instead, it will flee, follow a path,



The bearded fellow is, believe it or not, the player's character (above). The three-legged Houndeye is a pack animal that acts like one (top).

HALF LIFE

BRILLANTE EN PC, MEJOR EN DREAMCAST

Las líneas telefónicas van a echar humo cuando nos pongamos a pegar tiros con el éxito de Sierra



Los que seáis aficionados a los juegos de PC seguro que os habéis puesto a dar saltos de alegría al conocer que habrá una versión de «Half Life» para Dreamcast, y que además nos permitirá jugar partidas en red. Si todavía no lo conocéis, sabed que estamos hablando de un shoot'em up subjetivo "tipo Doom" que se ha llevado más de 50 premios al mejor juego del año otorgados por publicaciones de todo el mundo, y que ha logrado vender más de 1'5 millones de copias en su versión para ordenador.

El anuncio de su conversión para Dreamcast fue hecho por Sierra Studios y Valve en la pasada edición de Milia, en la que además adelantaron ya algunos detalles de cómo será esta maravilla.

Sus creadores están decididos a hacer una versión incluso mejor que la de PC a nivel gráfico. Obviamente, lo más llamativo será la opción para disputar partidas a través de Internet, pero nuestro «Half Life» incluirá también una nueva misión para el modo individual.

La primera intención es que «Half Life» esté disponible el próximo verano, así que se avecinan unas vacaciones de lo más movidito.